

GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS
IN OUR HOMES, SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES



December 1, 2014

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GIHN New Member

Cindy Rader lives in Tennessee. She became ill from toxic mold after the flood in Nashville in May of 2010. She actively participates in several mold groups on Facebook and is the administrator of one of the groups. She is interested in educating, advocating and helping others who are affected by exposure to toxic mold.

Please join me in welcoming Cindy.

Mold Problems in the Georgia State Supreme Court Building

Judges and staff who work in the 60-year-old state Judicial Building have reported that water and ceiling tiles are coming down. **They have seen mold in their offices, encountered brown tap water and experienced lingering coughs and other symptoms sometimes associated with building problems.**

The complaints prompted the Georgia Building Authority to order nearly \$8,000 in outside testing of air quality in August. Air filtration was declared "nonexistent," and results showed elevated levels of the types of mold spores associated with high humidity, dust, damp building materials and water damage.

Court veterans say the problems with the Judicial Building, constructed in 1954, are nothing new. "I've been saying for a long time that this is a sick building," said Justice Carol Hunstein.

Judges and staffers also have expressed concerns about air quality. A May email by a Court of Appeals staff attorney reported that when she took off old vent filters after HVAC units were cleaned, people started sneezing and coughing; one person "coughed so hard she almost could not breathe."

Bentley in the AG's office in July reported that an employee on the sixth floor of 254 Washington Street was having a "severe reaction to his office," writing that, when an air filter was removed there, it was completely black.

Every office has a leak whether it be from a window, roof drainage or problems with old HVAC units.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Body's Bacteria...effect on brains* on page 2

Body's Bacteria May Keep Our Brains Healthy

The microbes that live in your body outnumber your cells 10 to one. Recent studies suggest these tiny organisms help us digest food and maintain our immune system. Now, researchers have discovered yet another way microbes keep us healthy: They are needed for closing the blood-brain barrier, a molecular fence that shuts out pathogens and molecules that could harm the brain.

The findings suggest that a woman's diet or exposure to antibiotics during pregnancy may influence the development of this barrier. The work could also lead to a better understanding of multiple sclerosis, in which a leaky blood-brain barrier may set the stage for a decline in brain function.

With multiple sclerosis, neurobiologists are at a loss to explain why the disease progresses so erratically, so the idea that changes in the body's microbes may alter the blood-brain barrier to make the brain more vulnerable to damage is appealing.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

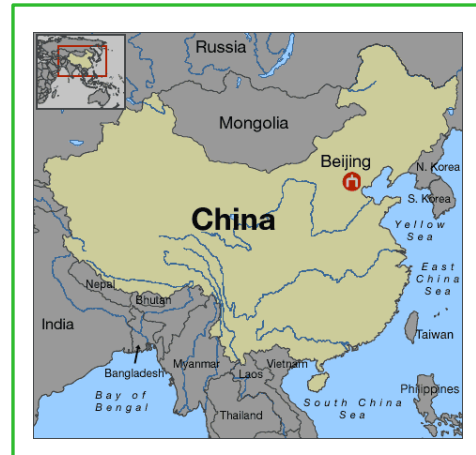
740 Million People Affected by Second-Hand Smoke in China

Passive smoking constitutes a serious public health risk to both children and adults. It is also a major source of indoor air pollution.

"Inhaling the smoke, albeit passively can lead to a number of respiratory diseases and also affect cardiovascular conditions," says Zhi Xiuyi, from Cancer Foundation of China.

According to the latest report by Chinese Association on Tobacco Control, China now has over 300 million smokers, with over 740 million affected by second-hand smoke. More than 1.3 million die of smoking-related diseases every year. That's a number higher than the death toll caused by AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria combined.

Click [here](#) to read the article.



Beijing Passes Bill to Ban Smoking in All Indoor Public Places (China)

Beijing adopted an anti-smoking legislation on Friday, vowing to ban smoking in all indoor public places, workplaces and public transport vehicles.

The draft regulation was passed by vote at a meeting of the Standing Committee of Beijing Municipal People's Congress. **It is scheduled to become effective on June 1 next year.**

According to the bill, smoking is also prohibited in open-air space in kindergartens, schools, child welfare institutions, women and children's hospitals, fitness and sports venues, and cultural relic protection sites that are open to the public.

Tobacco advertisements are not allowed to appear outdoors, in public places and transports, as well as in media including radio, TV, films, newspapers, books, and internet. All forms of tobacco promotions and title sponsorship are banned.

Teachers are forbidden from smoking in front of students in primary and secondary schools. Schools are also required to help students quit smoking and educate them about the harm of smoking.

The regulation also prohibits selling cigarettes to minors through vending machines and internet.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Genetically Diverse Mouse Model* on page 3

Genetically Diverse Mouse Model Can Predict Human Response to Chemicals

A genetically diverse mouse model is able to predict the range of response to chemical exposures that might be observed in human populations, researchers from the National Institutes of Health have found. Like humans, each Diversity Outbred mouse is genetically unique, and the extent of genetic variability among these mice is similar to the genetic variation seen among humans.

Using these mice, researchers from the National Toxicology Program (NTP), an interagency program headquartered at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), were able to identify specific genes or chromosomal regions that make some mice more susceptible, and others more resistant, to the toxic effects of benzene. Benzene is a common air pollutant and human carcinogen found in crude oil, gasoline, and cigarette smoke, and naturally produced by wildfires and volcanoes.

The scientists found that, like humans, each Diversity Outbred mouse developed at The Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor, Maine, responded to the effects of the chemical exposure differently. Exposure responses were assessed by measuring the frequency of micronucleated red blood cells, a biological marker of chromosomal damage, which is a hallmark of benzene exposure. The researchers measured the levels of this biomarker in each mouse before and after exposure.

Some mice demonstrated extraordinary sensitivity to the exposure, while others showed no response. The range of response from lowest to highest was approximately 5-fold. Since the researchers knew the genetic makeup of each mouse, they could pinpoint the regions involved in susceptibility or resistance to the chemical exposure, and then look for related genetic regions in human chromosomes.

"This paper points out the significant genetic differences that are found throughout every population that must to be taken into account when extrapolating data from animals to humans," said Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., director of NTP and NIEHS. "The Diversity Outbred mouse is a useful model for predicting the range of response that might be observed in humans following exposure to a chemical."

Click [here](#) to read the article.



Research into Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a complex illness that affects between 0.5 and 2 percent of adults in the U.S. CFS is characterized by a severe debilitating fatigue lasting at least six consecutive months that is not alleviated with rest. Individuals with CFS also report cognitive, sleep and musculoskeletal pain disturbances, and symptoms similar to those of infectious diseases. At least a quarter of those suffering from CFS are unemployed or receiving disability because of the illness. **The annual value of lost productivity in the United States alone is at least \$9 billion.** Although the symptoms of CFS resemble those of infectious diseases the causes of most cases of CFS are unknown and there is no approved diagnostic test or treatment.

We are actively seeking funds to support comprehensive studies into the role of the bacteria, fungi and viruses in CFS. Research into the human microbiome is an exciting new pathway to advance our understanding of the role that over a trillion microorganisms in our body play in health and in the development of disease. An altered microbiome may cause not only gastrointestinal problems but also immunological and brain dysfunction. As the world's largest and most advanced academic center in microbe discovery, identification and diagnosis, the Center for Infection & Immunity at Columbia University is optimally positioned to embark upon the challenge to determine how bacteria, fungi, viruses and toxins (and the immune response to them) contribute to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME). Discoveries in these areas may point us toward treatment strategies that reduce vulnerability through exclusion diets, probiotics or drugs.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Dick's Sporting Goods—toxic mold* on page 4

Dick's Sporting Goods--Employees Sue Over Exposure to Toxic Mold

Two former employees of a local sporting goods store claim they were sickened after being exposed to toxic mold for a prolonged period of time.

Michelle C. Wilcox and Kokenia M. Sam filed suit against Dick's Sporting Goods Inc., General Growth Properties Inc. and their insurers in the 24th Judicial District Court on September 10. Wilcox and Sam allege that they were employed by the Dick's Sporting Goods located in the Oakwood Mall at 197 Westbank Expressway in Gretna.

The plaintiffs contend that the building housing their workplace was damaged and water leaked into the roof prior to the store's grand opening in September 2013 and that Dick's Sporting Goods did not take appropriate measures to prevent water leakage and mold development. As a result, Wilcox and Sam assert that during their employment with Dick's Sporting Goods they were unknowingly exposed to hazardous levels of mold that was found throughout the store. The plaintiffs claim that due to their exposure to toxic mold they missed significant time from work and had to undergo medical treatments and hospitalization.

The defendant is accused of failing to report building damage to owner, failing to properly maintain the store, failing to make necessary repairs, failing to keep a store in safe condition, failing to take necessary action to avoid personal injuries, failing to furnish reasonably safe employment for employees and failing to properly and promptly inform employees of dangerous work conditions.

An unspecified amount in damages is sought for medical expenses, physical pain and suffering, mental anguish, loss of enjoyment of life and lost wages. Click [here](#) to read the article.



Sewage Damage: A Home Health Hazard

When dealing with sewage damage, there are a host of different problems that arise when this nasty business comes to the surface at your property. This problem can be found throughout the United States. This can range from the overwhelming odor, to the parasitic diseases, and to the potential water damage issues that may arise from the displacement of the water onto the floor or walls. All this serve as potential catalysts to the necessity of undertaking a sewage damage cleanup job. The first part that needs to be taken care of is the removal of the excess sewage and water from the area of concern.

When a sewage backup occurs there is usually a liquid of one form or another that is extolled out from the pipe or toilet. All of this excess fluid comes spilling out, which promptly lands on the floor of your property. Once this occurs the liquids will try to leach into any porous material that it lands on. Examples could be the wall and floor, if this is not taken care of immediately it could lead to long term problems in the property.

Sewage damage contains biologically hazardous elements that are found in the water. Raw sewage comes from the network of pipes that connect to your home to public sewer. As such, when a sewage line backs up into a property, the sewage is not just your sewage but other properties as well which could spread diseases that were not even from your home. Examples of issues that arise are damages to different organs that the parasites might attach, infection of the eyes or skin, and if a person is asthmatic then the symptoms could be exacerbated by the sewage. Another critical factor is the smell which needs to be removed quickly before it sets into the furniture, fabric, walls, and floors, in your home.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Louisiana Federal Court ruling* on page 5

Louisiana Federal Court Interprets Mold Exclusion and Endorsement

Many insurance policies include exclusions that are modified by endorsement. An analysis of the specific language in both the exclusionary provision and the modifying endorsement are critical in determining whether a peril is excluded by the policy.

Evonthe Hayes v. Southern Fidelity Insurance Company, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 14692 (E.D. La. October 15, 2014) involved a Hurricane Isaac claim for damages to a home in Louisiana. The insured claimed wind, rain and mold damage. The insurer's expert opined that the mold damage was due to overflow of the air conditioner's condensate drain pan. The insured argued that mold was a result of the storm. The policy contained a "fungi" exclusion with an endorsement for limited fungi coverage with a limit of \$10,000. The insurer moved for partial summary judgment claiming that the insured's claim for mold damage should be limited to \$10,000. The court denied the insurer's motion based on its reading of *Orleans Parish Sch. Bd. v. Lexington Ins. Co.*, 123 So.3d 787 (La. Ct. App. 2013).

The fungi exclusion (which included an anti-concurrent causation preamble) stated, in relevant part: We do not insure for loss caused directly or indirectly by any of the following (*fungi, wet or dry rot, or bacteria*). Such loss is excluded regardless of any other cause or event contributing or in any sequence to the loss.

The district court held that the mold exclusion only applied to damage that is attributed to mold itself, not the initially covered peril, and that the "Other Coverages" provision "reinstates" coverage if the loss was first "caused by" a peril insured against, "and then coverage is limited in the endorsement only to the extent that the 'fungi' . . . causes an increase in the loss." **The court denied the insurer's motion for partial summary judgment, stating that the insurer "will have to prove that any damage it seeks to exclude would not have occurred but for the presence of mold."**

The Hayes case also includes some interesting analysis on Louisiana's bad faith statute and coinsurance issues. But this case represents an example of the sometimes complex interplay between an excluded loss and give back provisions. Click [here](#) to read the article.

Toxic Additives
Aromatics are the
poisonous chemicals
that oil refiners add to
all gasoline

Toxic Chemicals in Gasoline

In 1990, Congress passed the Clean Air Act Amendments and directed the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce the dangerous chemical additives in gasoline. Today, 24 years later, this law has yet to be enforced in any meaningful way. Aromatics, the poisonous chemicals that oil refiners add to all gasoline, remain a significant component of the fuels we use. This is unacceptable.

In the decades since Congress first directed the EPA to reduce the level of aromatics in gasoline, abundant, low-cost alternatives to these toxic additives have become available. Replacing toxic aromatic gasoline additives with inexpensive, renewable alternatives would benefit the economy, environment, public health, national security, and even the auto industry. But it would not benefit oil companies.

Petroleum refiners produce aromatics from crude oil. Aromatics are the most toxic, energy inefficient, and expensive gasoline component, and on average, make up 25 percent of each gallon of gasoline we use. While gasoline costs have recently come down, aromatics costs keep prices higher than they need to be.

The White House should not only reject EPA's lower biofuels requirements, but should also order EPA to obey Congress's long-neglected directive to reduce the toxic compounds in gasoline. By replacing aromatics with cleaner alternatives, the nation will be on the right path to cleaner burning, less costly fuel.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Condo Flood...insurance nightmare* on page 6

Condo Flood Leaves Owner in Insurance Nightmare (Canada)

Carmen Cheung thought her condo renovations were almost done – then a contractor punctured a pipe, sending an hour-long cascade of water through the walls of her Burnaby home.

"I saw ... like rain coming down from outside, it was pouring like a waterfall," Cheung told CBC News.

The damage was so extensive that Cheung — and the occupants of three other condos in the building - had to relocate during the repairs. A disaster turned into a nightmare, as Cheung found herself in a snarl of seven insurance companies.

"I feel so frustrated, and at the same time I feel very sorry for the other units, because they have to pay the expenses too," she said.

The insurance companies stalled over who should cover what. The property manager for the strata corporation began demanding deductibles and leaving phone messages, suggesting Cheung is responsible to pay or the matter may end up in court.

"You know what? No insurance claim should be that difficult," says Kevin McIntyre, president of the B.C. Insurance Broker's Association.

"But when you have a situation like this, when you have three different adjusters involved in one probably relatively small loss, and a whole bunch of insurance companies and a property manager involved and a strata council involved — it's just too much. It's just too confusing - and frankly it shouldn't happen."

Water damage and floods are the highest causes of loss to Canadian insurance in recent years — flooding alone costing \$3.4 billion to the industry. That's driven premiums up — and put a lot of pressure on condo stratas not to make claims.

He says he's seen bullying from all sides in disputes, from condo board members, property managers and neighbours.

Click [here](#) to read the article.



Free Mold Awareness Seminars in New Jersey

The Hudson Regional Health Commission and Rutgers University will provide free mold awareness and general safety procedures training seminars for residents in five Hudson County municipalities in December and January, officials said.

Officials say those attending will learn how to:

- identify and where to look for mold in their home;
- how to protect themselves when cleaning up mold;
- the types of personal and respiratory protection needed to protect themselves;
- clean-up procedures;
- environmental/safety issues that may be present when cleaning up after a hurricane/flood.

Here's a list of when and where the sessions will be held:

- Dec. 3 at the Secaucus Library, 1379 Paterson Plank Rd.;
- Dec. 4 at the Bayonne Library, 697 Avenue C
- Jan. 8 at the Hoboken Multi-Service Center, 124 Grand St.;
- Jan. 13 at the Harrison Senior Citizen Center, 221 Harrison Ave.;
- Jan. 15 in Jersey City at a location still to be determined.

All classes will run from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Free moisture meters will be given to the first 20 participants, one per household.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Property Managers--equally to blame* on page 7

Property Managers are Equally to Blame if Tenants are Living in Squalor

How is this allowed to happen? For months now, I've been sharing with Property Observer some of the conditions I've personally seen tenants have to endure. Things haven't changed much in this time.

While we asked before "Are your tenants living in squalor?" and aimed it towards the investors who own the property themselves, it's time for the real estate agents to get off their high horses.

Stop blaming the owners, stop blaming the tenants, you are just as responsible.

I was asked to attend a property inspection as a potential vendor had asked me to look at placing his property on the market. The slideshow above is what I encountered.

You can see leaking ceilings and mould on walls throughout the unit. Not only that, but mould and fungus growing in the kitchen cupboards and toilet floors and walls. The windows are unable to be opened due to fungus and a build-up of dirt along the tracks. You can even see the rising damp on most walls!

To be downright honest and frank with you, it makes my blood boil. There was a child living in this unit, as well as an elderly person.

I asked myself: How did it become possible for the dwelling to reach this state?

And no, it's not self-managed. This property is managed by a brand name agency in the area.

I showed the owner the photos and gave him a quick report on the condition. I say quick as I could not spend anything more than five minutes in the unit due to the odour and the pungent smell of the mould.

I also asked the vendor if he had received any mid-term inspection reports from the managing agent, if they had been invited to attend the inspections and why the tenants had been allowed to live like this. Much could be gathered from the silence and the shake of the head in disbelief as he ran his eyes over the photos.



Property Managers are Equally to Blame if Tenants are Living in Squalor (cont'd)

I also asked the vendor if he had received any mid-term inspection reports from the managing agent, if they had been invited to attend the inspections and why the tenants had been allowed to live like this. Much could be gathered from the silence and the shake of the head in disbelief as he ran his eyes over the photos.

My straight to the point recommendations were these:

- **Sack the property manager**
- Take the property manager to tribunal and recover all management fees charged
- Quite frankly, they have not performed their job accordingly over the four years or so that they had managed this property.

When will landlords and property management teams take matters more seriously? Oh yeah, I forgot, it's not their fault if the tenants choose to live like this. It's ridiculous.

I believe that if periodic inspections actually took place and reports were not doctored, landlords would take their business to management teams that place value and care on the landlord's property as well as the tenant's living conditions.

It is true that property management is an underpaid job in the most part, but if you take on the responsibility then you have a duty to provide the service.

Alternatively, you can simply get out if you're not going to do anything other than collect rent and charge fees.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Oklahoma City Mother Concerned* on page 8

Oklahoma City Mother Concerned about Mold in Her Apartment

An Oklahoma City mother said her home is covered in mold and causing her and her kids to constantly be sick.

Debra Craig lives in public housing and said the property manager won't do anything about it because the mold is "dead."

She estimated 75 to 80 percent of her home is covered in mold. And all she wanted to do was transfer to a different unit, but she said the property manager is making it next to impossible.

Craig said she believes the mold is the cause of the family's chronic health issues.

Last week Craig told the property manager about this issue and they sent a maintenance person to check out the problem.

"The guy looked at some of the mold that was in the hallway and ran his finger across it and told me it was dead," said Craig.

Craig admitted she's not a mold expert, but believes without any treatment, the mold is definitely not dead.

"I don't know what else to do. I mean, I've asked them to take care of this or to do something about it. You know? They are making it like it's me. It's my fault," she said.

Slane said landlords are required by Oklahoma law to supply safe and livable homes for tenants.

"If somebody's just not doing their job and leaving a place uninhabitable, cause the law says it has to be habitable, if it's uninhabitable somebody probably needs to be fired," he said.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

Next Newsletter: January 1, 2015



Ventricular Fibrillation after Exposure to Air Freshener

A case of ventricular fibrillation due to butane toxicity after unintentional inhalation of air freshener is reported for its rarity and to create awareness among practitioners and the public. A 25-year-old woman collapsed in the supermarket after unintended exposure to air freshener sprayed into her nostrils. Her husband started cardiopulmonary resuscitation immediately, and she was brought to the hospital. She had coarse ventricular fibrillation. Defibrillation with 360 J was given, and the rhythm reverted to normal sinus rhythm after the third shock. Epinephrine was not administered, and she was treated with esmolol infusion for ventricular ectopy.

The patient recovered completely without any sequelae and was discharged on the fifth hospital day. On thin layer chromatography, the chemical content of the spray was identified to be isobutane. Avoiding epinephrine and administering β -adrenergic blockers may protect the catecholamine-sensitized heart early during resuscitation in butane exposure cases.

Click [here](#) to read the abstract.

Quick Links:

Website: <http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

Health Effects:
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Position Statement:
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